

COBB'S AMERICA GUYED BOOKS

# INDIANA

*Intellectually  
She Rolls  
Her Own*



by  
**IRVIN S. COBB**



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*Cobb's America Guyed Books*

**INDIANA**

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BY IRVIN S. COBB

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## FICTION

SNAKE DOCTOR  
J. POINDEXTER, COLORED  
SUNDRY ACCOUNTS  
FROM PLACE TO PLACE  
THOSE TIMES AND THESE  
LOCAL COLOR  
OLD JUDGE PRIEST  
BACK HOME  
THE ESCAPE OF MR. TRIMM  
FIBBLE D.D.

## WIT AND HUMOR

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MAINE	NORTH CAROLINA
NEW YORK	INDIANA
KENTUCKY	KANSAS

A LAUGH A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY  
A PLEA FOR OLD CAP COLLIER  
ONE THIRD OFF  
THE ABANDONED FARMERS  
THE LIFE OF THE PARTY  
EATING IN TWO OR THREE LANGUAGES  
"OH WELL, YOU KNOW HOW WOMEN ARE!"  
"SPEAKING OF OPERATIONS—"  
EUROPE REVISED  
ROUGHING IT DE LUXE  
COBB'S BILL OF FARE  
COBB'S ANATOMY

## MISCELLANY

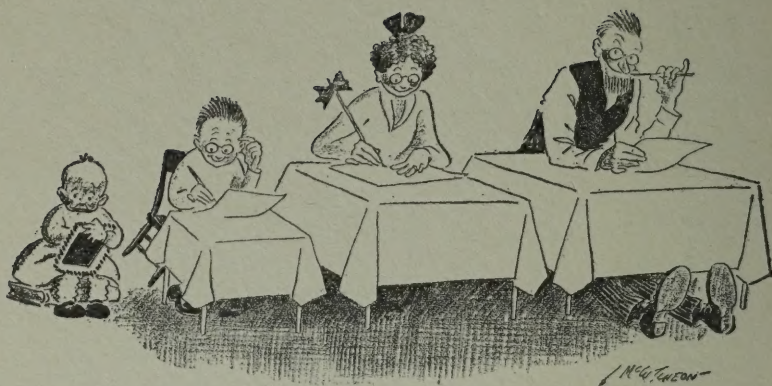
STICKFULS  
THE THUNDERS OF SILENCE  
THE GLORY OF THE COMING  
PATHS OF GLORY  
"SPEAKING OF PRUSSIAN—"

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NEW YORK: GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY







INDIANA IS NOT CONTENT TO BORROW HER LITERARY IDEALS  
FROM GREENWICH VILLAGE. SHE ROLLS HER OWN!



# INDIANA

BY  
IRVIN S. COBB

*With Illustrations by*  
JOHN T. McCUTCHEON



NEW YORK  
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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INDIANA

—C—

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Indiana is not content to borrow her literary  
ideals from Greenwich Village. She rolls  
her own! . . . . . *Frontispiece*

PAGE

Your Indianian of today, pure Northerner on  
one side and one hundred per cent South-  
erner on the other, is the most typical  
American in the whole Democracy . . . . 15

Indiana, the home of art and letters and of  
old-fashioned cookery, is as noble a slice of  
earthly cake as this country can show . . . 25

They Met and Married in Indiana . . . . . 37

“——On the Banks of the Wabash far away”. 45





# INDIANA





# INDIANA

## I

SOMETHING which William Allen White said here the other month in his latest eulogy of Kansas impressed me. On second thought, it couldn't have been his latest one; he's probably working on that now. So it must have been his next-to-the-latest. His positively very latest will be out pretty soon, I expect, and if the market holds up there is no telling when we shall be having his last one. In another volume of this series I shall ask leave to spread upon the minutes a more extended comment on Mr. White's sentimental leanings in this general direction.

But, for the time, that neither is here nor

*Cobb's America Guyed Books*

there. What I am getting at is that I was struck by a statement let fall by him at the outset of his remarks. This was the pregnant paragraph he started off with:

“It is curious how State lines mark differences in Americans. . . . The larger sectional differences may be somewhat the result of climatic influences. But the distinguishing points between a Kansan and a Missourian, between a New Yorker and a citizen of Vermont, between . . .” (and so forth and so on) . . . “arise from the changes in men made by social and political institutions.”

Now, in the main, and saving certain exceptions, he was right there. This man White so often is right in what he says that it just naturally makes one despair for the future of the old theory of the mathematical certainty of mortal error. He was correct

## *Indiana*

for so far as he went, but I maintain he did not go far enough.

When he said—re-quoting him for emphasis—that the distinguishing points “arise from the differences in men made by social and political institutions” he should have added: “and by adjacent great cities and the influences of such great cities.”

For proof of this I take Indiana, which is my present topic, and being purposed to strengthen a claim by comparisons, I couple Indiana with the two States which lie broadside to her and sandwich her in. In another booklet of this series I ventured the assertion that Indiana was the most typically American of the States so often misnamed under the once appropriate but now erroneous title of Middle-Western Group. After a period of consideration I find this allegation calls, not for qualification but for enlargement. Indiana is not merely the most typically



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American State of the olden Northwest; I make so bold as to affirm that she is the most typically American State in the American democracy.

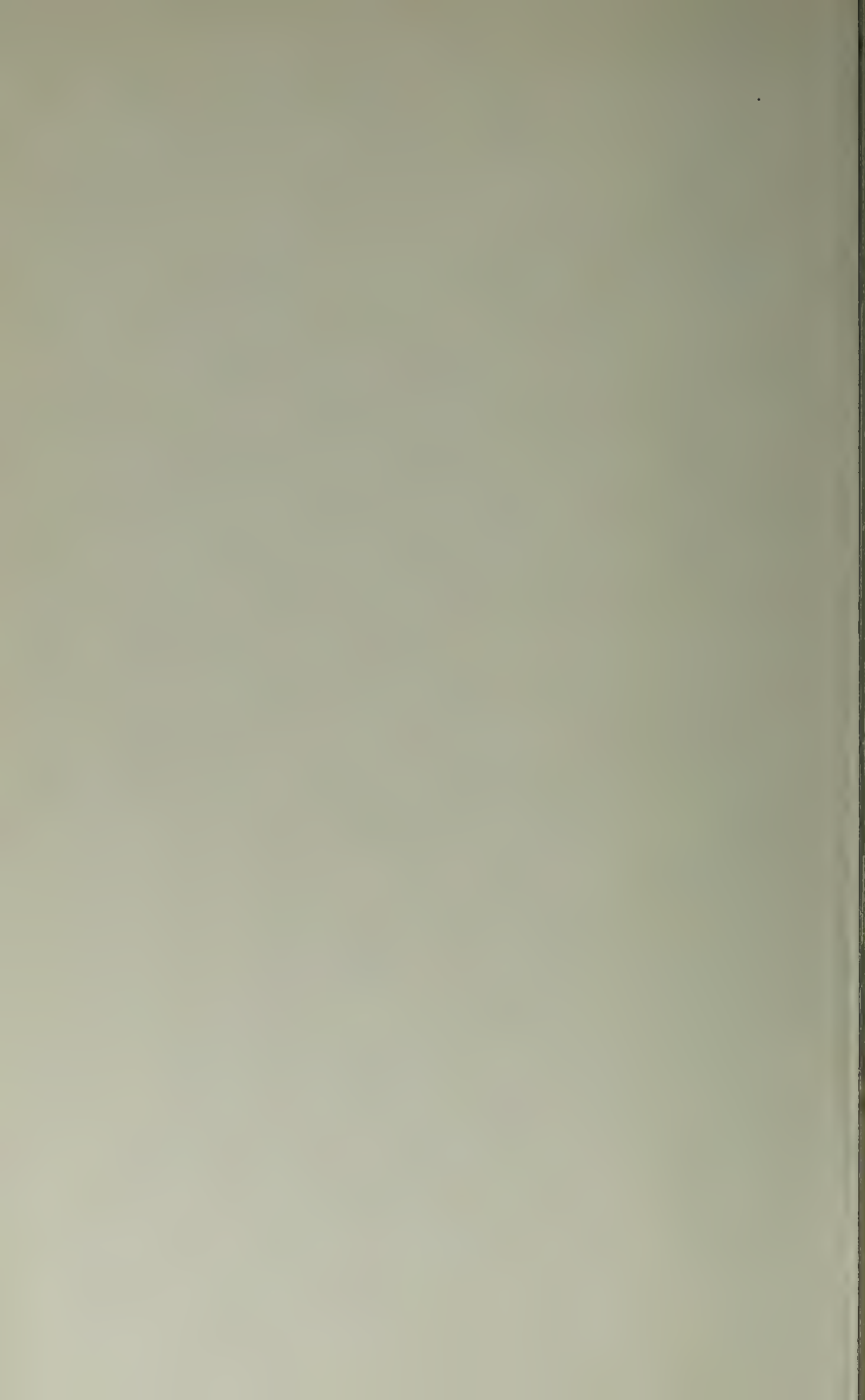
Now, climatically, and likewise geographically, there appears to be no valid reason why Indiana should be so distinctively unlike Ohio and Illinois, nor socially and politically is there very much reason, either.

But she is, and there's no getting around it.

On the map she is revealed as the central slice of that incredibly fertile stretch of contiguous territory which George Rogers Clark and his little squad of half-drowned, all-hungry, web-footed, lion-spirited adventurers snatched away from the British for the enrichment, first, of Virginia, and ultimately of the young Union; the middle layer of perhaps as noble a slice of earthly cake



YOUR INDIANIAN OF TODAY, PURE NORTHERNER ON ONE SIDE  
AND ONE HUNDRED PER CENT SOUTHERNER ON THE OTHER, IS  
THE MOST TYPICAL AMERICAN IN THE WHOLE DEMOCRACY.





## *Indiana*

as the records of the greed among nations for terrestrial aggrandizement can show; the in-betweeners of three great States which go sprawling across the same parallels of latitude, having the Ohio River for their common border at the south and stretching northward, all three of them, to the Great Lakes.

This relativity and these similarities in situation being what they are, the question becomes yet more puzzling: Why should the Hoosiers vary unmistakably in type from the Suckers who neighbor them on the west and from the Buckeyes—to use the ancient term—who live just over the eastern edge?

The circumstance of the lateral boundary lines cannot explain it for, in large part, these lines were arbitrarily drawn and without regard for physical conformations. Or,

if the boundary lines have to do with it, why should the same rule fail in illustrative cases that might be readily cited? If I am one to say, a North Dakota man is very much like a South Dakota man. The average Pennsylvanian, unless he be Philadelphian or Souse Beslehem Dutch, is in all discernible regards a blood brother to the average Ohioan. You could shake up half a dozen average up-country Georgians in the same hopper with half a dozen average midland Alabamans and it would require the keen eye of a skilled student of types, familiar with local idioms and local customs, to pick out t'other from which. A biologist couldn't; even a native-born psychologist would be put to it, I think, to make the selections.

To me, always, it has seemed that the average Connecticut Yankee, in his general aspects, his prejudices, his customary moods and customary inclinations, was a sort of

## *Indiana*

pale twelfth carbon-copy of the average Massachusetts Yankee. But an Indianian is distinctively and conclusively and beyond peradventure of a doubt, an Indianian and not to be confounded or confused with any non-Indianian.

By some it might be contended that the cause for this radical dissimilarity lies in the prior conditions of Indiana's settlement. It might be pointed out that she today is inhabited by a stock more undilutedly Britanic in its original sources than certain nearby commonwealths contain. The same is true and not to be gainsaid. Twinned and contemporary waves of intermingling immigration largely colonized Indiana in the days of her beginnings as a white man's country.

First, it would seem, the pioneering stocks tarried in the older communities for long enough to suck out of the soil and out of

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their environments and out of their vicinity contacts certain essential characteristics of mass-temperament and mass-predisposition. Then, as the virgin domain beyond the mountains opened up, that impulse which is as old as the human race is, set in motion toward the sundown side of the horizon two restless living streams—one a stream rising in Connecticut and Northern New York and heading west by south, and the other rising in Virginia and the Carolinas and Georgia, with supplementary trickles out of Kentucky and Tennessee, and winding its course west by north. They met and ran together in human eddies in Indiana.

Your typical third-generation Indianian of today is a pure Northerner on one side of his ancestry and a one hundred per cent Southerner on the other side. And if that combination doesn't make him a typical American what better blend can you name?

## *Indiana*

Still, in a ~~somewhat~~ lesser degree this also is true of Illinois and of Ohio as well. Why, then, does a Hoosier, as counter-distinguished from his kinfolk, remain so clearly and unmistakably a Hoosier?





## II

**I**T CAN'T be ethnologic. Surely it isn't climatic or geographic.

The fact of it isn't altogether to be accounted for by parallels in the sociological and political docketing of these three. In the opinion of this writer the basic explanation of why Indiana is so self-contained and so different from the two sisters that stand as her file-closers grows out of the fact that Indiana is a State of towns and not a State of cities, just as, for example, Mississippi is; whereas, on the other hand, Ohio is a State of many cities—of more cities of a given rank, I believe, than any State in the Union—while Illinois is a State of one great dictatorial overmastering city.

There is not a corner of Ohio but is within close proximity to a city, or anyway a city-

*Cobb's America Guyed Books*

ette; invariably some hustling, bustling, clanging, overgrown market-town or other is but a trolley-ride distant. There is hardly a district in Illinois but feels, by day and by night, the hectoring pull of Chicago.

Big cities certainly do something to the country, for cities are greedy, man-eating, blood-sucking things. A big city is not content to feed on what lies within her immediate vicinage. The soft coal that belches from the factory chimneys blurs the faces of the plebes into a common resemblance. The pulse and beat of her industrial throbbings sooner or later will hammer the individualities out of them so that they turn to following set forms in dress and thought and expression. Her cannibalistic appetite drains away their personalities until the masses of them become mere entries in a telephone directory, mere units in a census report, mere fodder for statistical tallies, with



INDIANA, THE HOME OF ARTS AND LETTERS AND OF OLD-FASHIONED COOKERY, IS AS NOBLE A SLICE OF EARTHLY CAKE AS THIS COUNTRY CAN SHOW.





## *Indiana*

here and there one unconquerable soul rising above the urban monotonies, like a lone pine in ploughed ground.

She isn't satisfied yet. She reaches forth the tentacles of a resistless influence to filch the character from lesser near communities, to take the rural calm out of the rural life, to replace the simplicities and the slow-paced philosophies of the countryside with false airs, false aspirations, false fashions, and false pretenses, making each cross-roads hamlet within the limits of her malign radius a cheap little copy-cat and imitation of the contaminating monster hard by, its manners spoiled, its moralities upset, its peculiar institutions discredited or abandoned.

A city is like unto the dromedary of the Arabian fable—let her but poke her nose under the door-flap and presently she has filled the whole tent with her bulk and her fleas and her stinks and her spraddling ar-

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rogant presumptions. When a camel grows active it begins to smell bad; where it rises up it blots out the landscape; where it stretches itself the terrain is polluted and disturbed. You may say the same for a city—only, no city that I know of can, in these piping Prohibition times, go six days without drinking. Ask your bootlegger.

Out of all the States New Jersey is in this regard the most conspicuous sufferer. The calamity of her location decrees for her a dismal fate: that everlastingly she shall be the scullery maid, the junk collector and the scrap-heap guardian of two great cities, neither of which compensates this ill-treatment by toting the burden of her taxes, seeing that both of them—New York and Philadelphia—lie beyond her confines. They are not mainstays, but marauders.

They make a dumping ground of New Jersey but they don't pay rent for such im-

## *Indiana*

pious usage of her. What she gets from them is a squatter-flock of suburban lodgers, and in season, locust-clouds of summer residents; they aren't given, though, they're merely loaned. They bed in New Jersey but they do business beyond the borders.



### III

**N**OW, Indiana sits in a luckier seat. To be sure, in Indianapolis she has one city of the sub-order of the top class. And likewise it is true that Indianapolis has striven mightily, during these recent years of our greatest commercial expansion, to become a lusty merchandising and manufacturing center; to grow into an industrial hub, as we love to call such. Give her credit; she has fought with pluck and perseverance notably to be noisy and to be fragrant with evil workshop odors; to be choked by black smoke and smeared up with soot; to be polyglot and piebald and many-voiced. But she has fought a losing fight if a gallant one.

Behold her present state; she neither is so clamorous as Chicago, nor so homely as Cincinnati nor so characterless as Cleveland.



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She is not so unmannerly as Jersey City, nor so dirty as Pittsburgh, not so foreign as Milwaukee, not so jumbled together every-which-way as Detroit, not so aimlessly excited as Los Angeles, not so smug as Philadelphia, not so densely packed as Manhattan, not so self-satisfied as San Francisco, not so ill-kempt as St. Louis. It is probable that never, no matter how hard she may try, can she hope to equal Brooklyn in dreariness or Boston in conceit or Washington in insolence.

I hate to say it, but Indianapolis has yet far to go before she can lay claim to being a real metropolis, as we use the word in this piping Rotary-Clubbed era. When it comes to stench, what has she to offer in competition with the Kansas City stockyards on a nice hot humid evening? When it comes to dirtiness she makes a strong showing, I grant you, but how about good old Youngs-

## *Indiana*

town, considerably less than half her size where, overnight, an albino pup turns to a Dalmatian and continues to pass as such until sent to the cleaner's?

When it comes to the radicalism and the unrest which seem to generate best wherever the unassimilated and unassimilatable elements are congregated the thickest, what price her puny congested quarters, her few foreign-born malcontents, her spindly handful of self-made Bolsheviks and bourgeois anarchists and house-broken I. W. W.'s against the magnificent showing of Paterson?—Paterson with but a paltry 135,000 and odd population, by the 1920 figures—where the only English many of the sturdy proletariat know is the swear words they use when referring to the government which we old-timey home-grown folks insist on having for this country!

Yes, sir, Indianapolis has yet a long road

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to travel ere she may aspire to qualify. I doubt she ever makes the grade, either; and all because of one thing. And that one thing—lamentable and deeply to be deplored from the standpoint of every true booster—is this: instead of Indianapolis dominating Indiana as Chicago dominates Illinois, Indiana continues to dominate Indianapolis. And until such time—if such time ever comes—when alien infusions have entirely transformed the city out of her present semblance I claim Indianapolis still will go on being dominated by Indiana; will keep right on being a somewhat blurry but nevertheless authentic mirror of Hoosierdom at large.

#### IV

THE proofs of this dominance are plain and they are plentiful. The state-wide influence as differing from urban insularity and civic provincialism is reflected in the Indianapolis newspapers and in her culture, which is considerable and distinctive, and in the underlying semi-bucolic aspect of many of her pretensions. Her politics, now: it is of the old-fashioned North American brand, odorous enough in all conscience, but not quite so vicious, not nearly so unwholesome as the Eastern European grafted variety which so firmly has budded itself upon native municipal corruption at certain populous points on or near the two seaboard.

If we must take a choice between evils, there are a good many of us who favor the domestic sort to the exotic. Our own noxious weeds and vermin we can endure be-

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cause they always were a part of our mid-Continental scheme of things. It is the English sparrow and the average English actor, the boll-weevil that preys on the cotton patches, the "devil's paint brush" that has taken the mountain meadows of New York, which we curse with the greatest fluency, not so much because these are pests as because they are imported pests, not originally included among the national misfortunes.

About Indianapolis there is yet another significant thing which I have noticed. Those among her people who display the least amount of social consideration in their efforts to obtain social consideration from others—in such matters, say, as passage room on the sidewalk, a seat in the street-car, precedence at the polling place—in short, those who sometimes superimpose rudeness and arrogance upon their desire



THEY MET AND MARRIED IN INDIANA.





## *Indiana*

for equality of treatment—are mainly not the foreign-born or the children of the foreign-born, as in some cities, but the native-born.

True, these persons usually are black folk—negro or negroid, and largely recruited from States below Mason and Dixon's Line. But there is less of race friction here than one might expect. The white citizen, while lacking the Southerner's touchiness on race contacts—a desire to win the colored brother's vote in elections may be at the back of this unresentful attitude on his part—has somewhat of the well-bred Southerner's tolerance for the other race's frequently unfriendly modes of expressing its social ambitions.

Like the Southerner, he doesn't expect a complete understanding of all the subtler shades of Caucasian ethics from a people whose great-grand-daddies came on a slave-

chain out of an African jungle. He carries in his subconscious mind the remembrance that it has been but the jump of a few generations from the head-hunter to the head-waiter.

Indeed, there is a good deal of the Southerner in the composition of the typical Hoosier. In his speech the more rollable consonants aren't somersaulted with quite the violence that one finds in the Great Lake country proper. He may not entirely ignore the lower case "r" but, with him, it is soft, as in good Camembert. His labial and linguistic peculiarities suggest Dixie more frequently than they suggest Down East. On one side of the family as I have pointed out, he traces back to Puritanical antecedents; but the sterner rigors of that ancestral strain have been softened by transplantation from the flinty Yankee hillsides to the kindlier loam of the Corn Belt.

## *Indiana*

That form of moral indigestion known as the New England conscience, which finds its intestinal expression in the New England boiled dinner, manifests itself but rarely in him and then only in a diluted form. John J. Ingalls said Kansas was the offspring of the Plymouth Rock; but in the Indiana species the egg is not quite so well-done as in the Kansas; the yolk of his nature is softer and there's a pronounced Southern flavor to it. That was proved in the early sixties — by Jesse D. Bright, and the Knights of the Golden Circle and the rest of the Copperhead element. He has pride of the Southern cast—not so much the pride which glories in census figures or financial showings, as the pride which exults itself over traditional customs and tribal achievements.

Ask any American-born Manhattanite—if you can find one or if the police can find

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one for you—who the War Governor of New York State was, and probably he won't even know what war you mean. Unless he is himself actively engaged in ward politics, it is likely that he doesn't know the name of the assemblyman from the district where he lives, or of his State Senator or his Congressman. But ask a Hoosier who his War Governor was and watch his chest swell out as he shouts: "War-Horse Morton, that's who!—nobody but just old Oliver P., be gee!"

And, as a matter of course, every son of Indiana is up to his armpits in politics and the knowledge of politics. All living Indianians are active politicians and frequently the dead ones are, too; they've voted them in close elections, out there, often. Indiana is called a pivotal State. Well, she certainly does spin around on her axis every four years.

**I**N a certain song, and one altogether Americanesque in its theme, its treatment and its melody—to wit: “On the Banks of the Wabash”—Indiana has her own State song. She is the only Northern State I can name, off-hand, that has, or at least she’s the only one of them that adopted a song by popular will and not as the result of an artificial propaganda designed to force some machine-made composition upon the populace.

She is not content to borrow the makings of such intellectual standards and such literary ideals as she has—and they are high ones—from the spaghetti-fed Infant Prodigies of Greenwich Village and Sheridan Square in New York, nor yet from the Russo-Slavonic-Germaniacal school of Chi-

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cago, with its air of infallibility and its garlicky breath. She rolls her own!

I dare maintain that since the present century began, Indiana has brought to potency and ripeness the best exemplars, the most deft craftsmen of serious American letters and humorous American portraiture in the printed line, and the drawn as well, that we have now among us; or, at any rate, she has produced a larger number of such conspicuously prominent and generally acknowledged leaders than any State among the forty-eight.

The Younger Intelligentsia sharply may disagree with this statement, but the Older Ignorencia, of whom I am proud to be one, will, I am sure, cast practically a unanimous vote in the affirmative when I nominate for the heads of the ticket the names of five men, all native-born Indianians, four of them living and one of them dead.





“———ON THE BANKS OF THE WABASH FAR AWAY.”



## *Indiana*

Here be my candidates: First, James Whitcomb Riley, poet, that singer who sang nearer to the hearts of plain people and to plain things than any other American ever has; whose lyrics had in them the click of the mowing-machine in the wheat, the gurgle of the catbird in the paw-paw thicket, the ripple of the sunfish's fins in the creek.

Second, Booth Tarkington, novelist, the truest reader of types and the most naturalistic delineator of those types, the closest student of social conditions writing today in this country, and, by these counts, therefore, our greatest fictionist.

Third, George Ade, satirist, the most distinguished and searching humorist we've bred since Mark Twain, an infallible laugh-getter whose motley cloaks a justified irony and a penetrating insight.

Fourth, Kin Hubbard, paragrapher, better known as "Abe Martin," who can pack

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more of authentic wit into a three-line quip than some writers could enclose in a three-pound volume; a man whose fun is so essentially American that when a vaudeville monologist steals one of his whimsies and repeats it before a Broadway audience only about six or seven persons in that audience know what the monologist is talking about.

Fifth, John T. McCutcheon, artist, who twenty years ago was our smartest cartoonist and still is—not a comic-stripper, not a patter comedian, not a freak contriver of freakish grotesqueries, but a kindly genius who puts character into caricature and human nature into thumbnail sketches.

And still the enumeration takes no account of the Lew Wallaces, the Charles Majors, the Meredith Nicholsons, the George Barr McCutcheons, and the rest of that unfailing Hoosier crop which knows neither blight nor drought nor a short

## *Indiana*

acreage. But this isn't meant to be a complete summary; it's merely an illustration to demonstrate a point.

Craving the reader's patience, an added argument or two: To a greater degree than any State of the original Northwest Territory, Indiana holds by the pioneering culture and its offshoots—old-fashioned cookery, old-fashioned decencies, old-fashioned virtues, old-fashioned vices, old-fashioned bigotries, old-fashioned philosophies springing out of the soil and smelling of the penny-rile and the sassafrack.

Old-fashioned religion, too; it finds a walled city and a stronghold here. Let the well-bred Englishman accept for his modified modernized conceptions a Hereafter hazily peopled by saints that wear spats and have their halos re-blocked once a fortnight on some heavenly Regent Street. Let the heathen city-dweller of the East read ser-

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mons out of road-maps and, for his Lord's Day replenishment, look to a filling station. Let the paganish Californian continue, if he will be so blind, to regard the seventh day as a day for picnicking, for going forth into the sunshine and into the wind, there to take his sinful ease under the tall trees. Let those lost and bedamned Continental races go on spending their Sundays when they might be keeping the Sabbath, a very different thing. For him—I mean now the rural Indianian and frequently the small-town Indianian—there's an eternal abiding place within the fortress of the Faith of the Fathers where he may tone up his dogmas with a flavoring of intolerance—sometimes—and be quite sure that no corrupting drop of liberalism has been squirted into the theological fountain wherefrom he draws his spiritual refreshment.

Finally, your average Indianian is a

## *Indiana*

joiner of secret orders—and that, alone, all other signs failing, would mark him for the typical American of the interior. He rejoices his soul in degree work behind locked doors, in sonorous titles and lodge funerals and bedazzling regalia and mysterious hailing-signs and potent passwords and a jeweled emblem for his outer vestments. The Ku Klux Klan swept Indiana like a hurricane in the tall timber; that was inevitable. Could you expect her to resist a thing with so much of mumbo-jumbo in its ritual, so much of voodooism in its aspects and such a well-mulched and highly-nourished spirit of fanaticism for the constant enrichment of its forcing bed? They tell me that in some Indiana towns now there's hardly an extra clean sheet on hand in case of accidents or company coming.

I nearly was forgetting to mention Indiana's magnificent yield of vice-presidents.



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On no account should this product be excluded from a paper aimed to prove the nationalistic normalcy of Indiana. Indiana gives us our vice-presidents and our vice-presidential candidates because she is the average American State. And by the same token, the average Indianian makes a suitable vice-presidential material because he is absolutely just that—average. If he were sub-average he couldn't get the nomination and if he were super-average he wouldn't take it.

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To see the laughable side of American life and to see as well the fine sturdy qualities that make the States of the Union as distinct as human beings is Cobb's unusual achievement in these books.

Beneath a humorous surface of good-natured joshing one finds the State and its people, their peculiarities and time-honored traditions.

You will find much amusement in these books—and a fresh point of view. They are eminently good to read and the best sort of souvenir to send a friend. Don't miss any of them. These volumes are now ready:

### NEW YORK:

So far as I know, General U. S. Grant is the only permanent resident.

### KANSAS:

A trifle shy on natural beauties, but plenty of mental Alps and moral Himalayas.

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INDIANA:

The middle layer of perhaps the noblest slice of earthly cake.

MAINE:

Great singers are made by contending with the words in the Maine geography.

NORTH CAROLINA:

A state most people have a sleeping-car knowledge of.

KENTUCKY:

From center to circumference, from crupper to hame, from pit to dome, a Kentuckian is all Kentuckian.

*Other volumes in preparation. Fifty cents each.*

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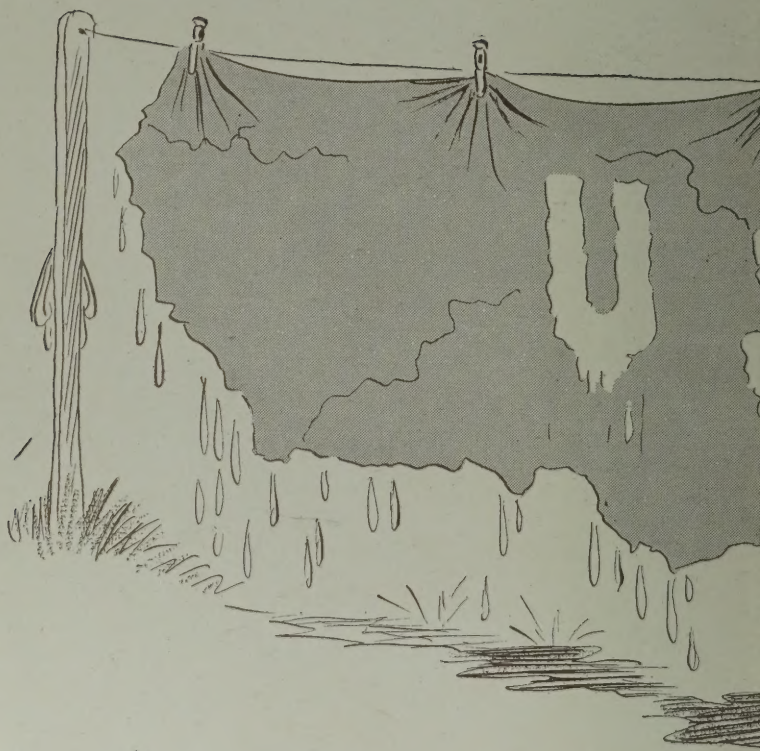








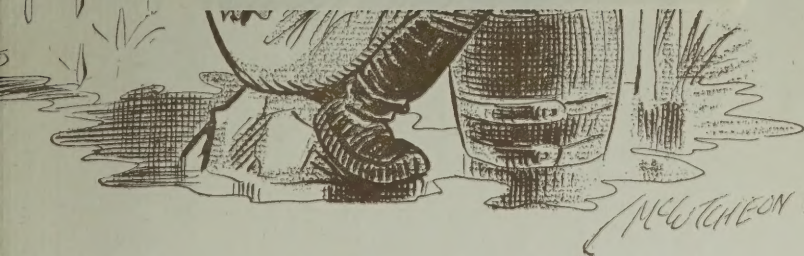




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## CONTENTS

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# COBB'S AMERICA GUYED BOOKS

*Cobb Says:—*

## NEW YORK

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